

RESTORATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES (FUDS)
PROJECT FACT SHEET
15 OCTOBER 1995
TAG REVIEW DATE: 08 AUGUST 1996

1. SITE NAME: Nellis Air Force Range, Area G

SITE NUMBER: J09NV050800

LOCATION:

City: Mercury
County: Nye
State: Nevada

PROJECT NUMBER: J09NV050801

CATEGORY: OE

INPR RAC: 4

ASR RAC: 2

2. POC's:

TECHNICAL MANAGER:

Name: Richard L. Pike
Office: CEHNC-OE-DG
Phone: 256-895-1559

GEO DISTRICT POC:

Name: Greg Boghossian
Office: CESPL-PM
Phone: 213-894-3574

GEO DIVISION POC:

Name: Anthony L. Mei
Office: CESP-D-CO-CE
Phone: 415-705-1468

HEADQUARTERS POC:

Name: James Huang
Office: CEMP-RF
Phone: 202-272-8883

SUPPORT DISTRICT (ASR) POC:

Name: Mike LaForge
Office: SIOAC-ESL
Phone: 815-273-8762

3. SITE DESCRIPTION:

Nellis Air Force Range **Area G**, also known as the Nevada Test Site, was a portion of the Las Vegas Gunnery and Bombing Range during World War II. The site is located in southwestern Nevada, 50 miles northwest of Las Vegas and 18 miles east of Beatty, Nevada, the nearest town. The portion of the Nellis Air Force Range comprising **Area G** consisted of 733,418.44 acres of mountains, desert areas, and dry lakes. It is now the home of

the Department of Energy's Nevada Test Site. The area has been utilized for testing nuclear weapons and associated high-energy programs.

4. SITE HISTORY:

The site was originally owned by the Department of the Interior and was withdrawn from public use due to Army Air Force training requirements on October 24, 1940. **Area G** was used as an air-to-air and air-to-ground gunnery range from December 1941 to 1949. The training consisted of firing at towed sleeves with .30 and .50 caliber ball ammunition as well as firing at fixed targets on the ground. This later progressed to firing .30 caliber frangible bullets at armored RP-63 Kingcobra aircraft from the waist positions on B-17 and B-24 bombers.

The property was relinquished to the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) by Presidential Order in 1950. During atomic weapons testing in the 1950s and 1960s, troop units from Camp Desert Rock held maneuvers involving live fire exercises on several portions of the site. Troop involvement in the tests was to simulate combat on the atomic battlefield using a wide variety of infantry and infantry-support weapons, including heavy artillery.

The Department of Energy (DOE) contractor on-site for many years operated their own organic explosive ordnance disposal team. An ASR interview with a retired contractor who had been tasked with the collection and destruction of ordnance items discovered on the site states that most of the military ordnance from the Desert Rock era was removed or destroyed in the period 1967-1968. OE items he personally remembers handling and disposing of include: 2.75" rocket warheads, 5" barrage rockets, practice anti-tank mines, 105mm HE, 90mm HE, 57mm HE, 76mm HE, 75mm HE, smoke grenades, and smoke rockets as well as thousands of rounds of expended .30 and .50 caliber ball. Interviews with the 259th EOD and Nellis AFB EOD uncovered no reports of discovery or removal of ordnance and munitions items in **Area G**. An interview with a DOE contractor currently responsible for all explosive handling on the Nevada Test Site said that he has found plenty of expended small arms ammunition on the dry lake beds but has not responded to any OE discoveries elsewhere on the site. He notes that all excavation projects are conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the discovery of hazardous material, including OE, is reported and dealt with immediately. He said they basically treat the entire site as having the potential for one sort of contamination or the other.

Prior to August 1963, more than 100 above-ground weapons tests, blast effects tests, and cratering experiments were

conducted on the site. Since that time, an additional 828 underground tests have been conducted. The property is currently owned by the Department of Energy and is now used for high-energy research projects.

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

NOTE: Project areas conform to the Nevada Test Site numbering system depicted in L-3 and Plate 3 in the Findings volume.

Area G-7910

Size, Acres:	15,700
Former Use:	Blast effects
Present Use:	High-energy research projects
Probable End Use:	Possible long-term nuclear waste storage facility
Ordnance Presence:	Confirmed
Type:	Unspecified OE items including HE projectiles (see site history)

Area G-1

Size, Acres:	28,700
Former Use:	Maneuver Area
Present Use:	High-energy research projects
Probable End Use:	Possible long-term nuclear waste storage facility
Ordnance Presence:	Confirmed
Type:	Unspecified OE items including HE warheads and projectiles (see site history)

Area G-11

Size, Acres:	9,530
Former Use:	Blast effects
Present Use:	High-energy research projects
Probable End Use:	Possible long-term nuclear waste storage facility
Ordnance Presence:	Confirmed
Type:	HE fuzes, JATO bottles and grenades

Area G-16

Size, Acres: 21,700
Former Use: Maneuver Area
Present Use: High-energy research projects
Probable End Use: Possible long-term nuclear
waste storage facility
Ordnance Presence: **Confirmed**
Type: HE grenades, 2.36" rocket
warheads, and
medium caliber HE
projectiles

Area G-18

Size, Acres: 15,840
Former Use: Maneuver Area
Present Use: Wildlife Management
Probable End Use: Possible long-term nuclear
waste storage facility
Ordnance Presence: **Confirmed**
Type: HE grenades, 2.36" rocket
warheads, and
medium caliber HE
projectiles

Area G-1920

Size, Acres: 18,830
Former Use: Maneuver Area
Present Use: Wildlife Management
Probable End Use: Possible long-term nuclear
waste storage facility
Ordnance Presence: **Confirmed**
Type: OE items including 105mm
and 106mm HE
loaded projectiles

Area G Remaining Areas

Size, Acres: 623,118.44
Former Use: Maneuvers
Present Use: Not Used (DOE)
Probable End Use: Possible long-term nuclear
waste storage facility

Ordinance Presence: **Potential**

Type: Although no OE has been reported in the remaining areas, individuals familiar with the site stated that they would expect to find OE contamination on any portion of the site due to extensive troop maneuvers. (see site history)

6. CURRENT STATUS: The draft Archive Search Report for Nellis Air Force Range, **Area G**, was completed by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, in April 1996.

7. STRATEGY:

A limited-scope EE/CA is recommended to close this site out with respect to any further DOD action. Recognizing the Department of Energy's success at limiting site accessibility (security clearance and badging are required for site entry) and their record of 30 years of successful handling of OE finds at **Area G** (The ASR did not report any OE-related injuries.), DOD action should be stopped. The HNC project manager should work closely with the District to take the necessary steps to turn this site over to DOE for further action.

8. ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

General: **Radiation.** Confirmed or potential environmental hazards are pending or contemplated for this site. DOE environmental personnel have cataloged 1183 HTRW sites which, in some cases, are co-located with the OE project areas. Additionally, there are large expanses of land surface contaminated with alpha radiation as a by-product of surface weapons testing and borehole escapes. These areas of the site are off-limits. These HTRW problems are **not** a result of DOD use and are **not** FUDS eligible. Special protective clothing and instruments are required prior to site entry and inspection. Many areas are so badly radioactively contaminated that it may not even be possible to remediate this site with available technology.

General: **National security issues prohibit the use of cameras and recording devices on site.** Security clearance and badging are required for site entry.

General: The site is traversed by gullies, canyons, and arroyos,

making transportation possible only by horseback or a 4-wheel-drive vehicle. Off-road driving in other than specifically designated areas is prohibited.

General: There are several endangered animals and plants listed in this portion of Nevada by the Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An on-site inspection by appropriate State and Federal personnel may be necessary to verify the presence, absence or location of listed species, or natural communities.

General: While no specific information was discovered for **Area G**, the entire Nellis Range Complex contains hundreds of cultural sites.

9. SCHEDULE SUMMARY: EE/CA

10. FUNDING/BUDGET SUMMARY: For Official Use Only